

Appl. No.: 10/709,688
Amdt. Dated: 6/8/2005
Reply to Office action of: 04/20/2005

AMENDMENTSTOTHEDRAWINGS:

There are no amendments to the drawings presented herewith.

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 – 14 remain in this application. Claims 1 – 2 and 4 – 7 remain as originally filed. Claims 8 – 14 have been amended to describe more properly the claimed invention.

The examiner has acknowledged that claims 3 – 5 are directed to allowable subject matter if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this amendment claim 3 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 4 and 5 being dependent on Claim 3 remain as originally filed.

No new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

The key to Applicants' invention resides in the use of only a connector body and a base body to provide a sealed watertight assembly. In addition, in the embodiments having two or more connector body modules mounted in the single base body module a U-shaped support for cables is provided in the base body module. Further, the connector body modules have grooves into which elongated elements may slide to ensure proper seating of said connector body modules in said base body module. Clearly when viewed in this light Applicants' claimed invention is not disclosed, taught, or fairly suggested by the cited reference.

Claims 1 – 2, and 6 – 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Isohata (US 5,435,738). Specifically, the Examiner states:

Isohata discloses a sealed connector-module assembly comprising:
a connector body (80);
a base body (10);
a sealed module (40) having at least three input cavities (44, at front end 56 of the module), at least three output cavities (44, at rear end 52 of the module), a resilient band (42), a side groove (formed by members 48, 49);
wherein the number of cavities/tracks is determined by the diameter of the terminals to be housed in the module.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. A fair reading of the Isohata reference discloses a three-part assembly comprising a cover housing (10), a cap housing

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(80), and a plug housing (40). The plug housing (40) is provided with a sealing element (42) which in order to seal the assembly must have cap housing (80) mounted on said plug housing (40). Without the use of the cap housing (80) there is no method of sealing the assembly. In addition, the Isohata reference does not disclose, teach, or fairly suggest the use of a U-shaped support for securing cables in conjunction with a lever, nor does this reference disclose, teach, or fairly suggest the use of grooves along which separate elongated elements to seat to ensure the proper seating of the connector modules within the base module.

Clearly the cited reference does not disclose, teach, or suggest the use of only two modules to provide a sealed assembly, a U-shaped support, or grooves for engaging elongated alignment elements. When viewed in this light it is clear that the claimed invention is now ready for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Claims 8 – 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Isohata (US 5,435,738). Specifically, the Examiner states:

Isohata substantially disclosed the claimed invention except for the number of cavities/tracks is vary upon the size of the terminals.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was to made to vary the number of cavities/tracks base upon the size of the terminals, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. As stated above, a fair reading of the Isohata reference discloses a three-part assembly comprising a cover housing (10), a cap housing (80), and a plug housing (40). The plug housing (40) is provided with a sealing element (42) which in order to seal the assembly must have cap housing (80) mounted on said plug housing (40). Without the use of the cap housing (80) there is no method of sealing the assembly. In addition, the Isohata reference does not disclose, teach, or fairly suggest the use of a U-shaped support for securing cables in conjunction with a lever, nor does this reference disclose, teach, or fairly suggest the use of grooves along which separate elongated elements to seat to ensure the proper seating of the connector modules within the base module.

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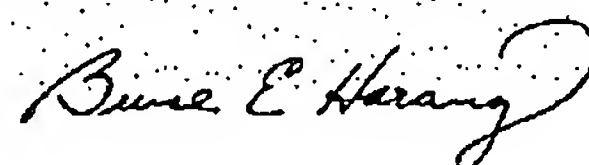
Applicants' claims 8 – 14 all are dependent on Claim 1 which teaches the use of a two part sealed assembly, not a three-part assembly as is critical to the Isohata reference. Thus, these dependent claims are addressed to an invention that removes one of the references critical elements.

Clearly the cited reference does not disclose, teach, or suggest the use of only two modules to provide a sealed assembly, a U-shaped support, or grooves for engaging elongated alignment elements where these particular number of tracks based on the sizes of the terminals is determinative. Thus, even if the routine skill in the art would suggest linking the number of tracks to the size of the terminals, it does not suggest how to remove one of the critical elements of the prior art to arrive at Applicant's claimed invention. When viewed in this light it is clear that the claimed invention is now ready for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicant acknowledges the prior art made of record but not relied upon as a basis of rejection by the Examiner. Since these references were not used as a basis of rejection Applicant makes no further comment regarding these references.

In view of the remarks herein, and the amendments hereto, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance, and such action and issuance of a timely Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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